

CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

LEGAL AND POLICY MANDATES (MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY)

1,444 comments. Comments under this topic addressed the scoping process, the consultation process, public input (and particularly Tribal input), the decision-making process, and federal regulations dealing with these areas. Many comments contain negative perceptions about these processes, who was included, who was excluded, who had clout and who didn't. Many comments questioned the more appropriate agency for bison management, the Montana Department of Livestock or the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Many comments stated that government to government consultation between the NPS and Tribal communities was inadequate. Also see comments in Objectives and Constraints.

Comment 1

"The federal government has pretty much left the comments of Native Americans and tribal governments and just left them out of the picture and made the plans and after the plans were all drafted and signed off, then Native Americans were contacted later and it kind of gives an, I guess, it gives us a left out feeling, you know, it's [an] uneventful thing and hopefully this thing will not happen anymore." - Tribe - Assiniboine Tribe, YELL-17730.

Comment 2

"We are likewise concerned about the lack of future public participation opportunities with the many other decisions that are deferred with this DEIS. For example, virtually all alternatives describe a process where the Montana State Vet will have the discretion to determine how many days after wintering bison leave an area of cattle grazing before cattle can be returned to graze the area. We certainly agree that the separation of cattle and bison in time and space is an important technique to minimize transmission, but we believe the parameters must be spelled out in the DEIS....The public has no assurance that decision based on science will be made, rather, if the previous pattern is followed, the Montana State Vet will leverage his decision making into a political opportunity to create further conflict and controversy. These decisions must be spelled out now or at least criteria used in the process should be provided along with the assurance that there will be full public participation, review and comment leading up to a final decision." - Organization, National Wildlife Federation, YELL-14819.

Comment 3

"Be it further resolved, that the Yankton Sioux Tribe Business and Claims Committee demands the U.S. Government to immediately initiate official government consultations with the Yankton Sioux Tribe on this matter as stipulated by Executive Order No. 13084, dated May 14, 1998, entitled 'Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments, and as mandated by National Environmental Policy Act stipulations that federally-recognized tribes be given special consideration, and that tribes are not to be considered as the 'general public'." - Tribe, Upper Sioux Community, YELL-14701.